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The articles in this double issue of the "IRCD Bulletin" deal with the proposed decentralization of the New York City school system. Edmund Gordon argues that decentralization can provide the best organizational structure--(1) to make the schools accountable to the parents and communities they serve, (2) to place the responsibility for the child's learning on the teachers and the school, and (3) to make the educational experience relevant to the child's life. He also feels that although it may delay integration, which has a positive effect on the child's school performance, decentralization will improve the ghetto schools, which in turn will help develop individual communities and permit them more power in the larger society. Other articles--"Ghetto Schools Need Black Power" (Edward Gottlieb), "The Brooklyn Dodgers" (Jason Epstein), and "The Mason-Dixon Line Moves to New York" (I.F. Stone)--deal with the conflict in the fall of 1968 between the decentralized Ocean Hill-Brownsville demonstration school district and the United Federation of Teachers. Also included are summaries of the positions of various governmental and professional organizations, excerpts from a statement of an ad hoc committee contesting the position of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and a selected bibliography. (EF)

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Decentralization and Educational Reform

Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D.

New York City public schools, like most urban school systems, have for a long time been the object of considerable criticism. Mounting evidence indicates that many of the children served by these schools do not receive an adequate education. In schools serving minority and low-income groups, achievement levels continue to lag seriously below city-wide and national norms. Even among those who complete their full 12 years of education, too many are unqualified for effective participation in society. Many simply drop out before reaching that point, presumably from their dissatisfaction with what they are or are not learning. The problem of creating a better educational system has received the continuous attention of the New York City Board of Education as well as the episodic attention of a variety of groups in the city.

In the past decade, numerous proposals have been offered for improving public education. A characteristic common to many of the administrative proposals advanced is that they attempt in one manner or another to eliminate or at least restructure the existing educational bureaucracy. The Friedman proposal for granting a family credit line to be spent for education as each family pleases, whether in public or private schools, is one proposal that has been advanced.[1] Another is the creation of competitive systems in the private sector utilizing public funds.[2] Still another is the mini-school serving 35 children, staffed by two teachers, and housed in store fronts or other available facilities; the mini-schools would be loosely federated and would rely on local institutions — museums, law courts, newspaper publishers — for offering specialized courses.[3] The creation of multiple systems or autonomous districts through the decentralization of the public school systems in New York and other large cities is a considerably less innovative alternative, although its implementation on a pilot scale has led to tumultuous opposition and bitter conflict in the New York City school system.

Several political and social issues confound this current struggle to reform education through the decentralization of the system. They reflect the interests of different groups involved.

(Continued on page 2)

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The Brooklyn Dodgers

Jason Epstein
Reprinted from *The New York Review of Books**

Whatever the outcome of the New York City school strike, the conflicting interests which caused it are irreconcilable. The city will have either to transform its public school system radically, which seems unlikely, or find that it has no school system at all, in which event it will be up to the parents themselves to contrive alternative ways to educate their children. Since the crisis in New York reflects a conflict within public education generally, it is of more than merely local interest to try to understand what the problem really is.

On the one hand there has arisen over the past ten years or so an indeterminate but substantial and articulate minority of parents, mainly but not exclusively from the ghettos, who are convinced that the public schools are incompetent and cannot be reformed by their present personnel: that furthermore many teachers are indifferent to their pupils while some are even hostile or brutal toward them. These teachers are protected by their union, the United Federation of Teachers, so that a parent who feels that his child has been ignored or abused is unlikely to get much satisfaction if he pleads his case through conventional channels. Through years of negotiation with the Board of Education the UFT has established principles of collective bargaining and job security so that during a recent five-year period, according to the *New York Post*, fewer than fifty teachers out of a total of 60,000 have been fired from the system, even though by the third grade some 60 percent of the children are doing so poorly that their chances for success in the higher grades, according to the

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> "In seeking these remedies, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the central issue is how best to raise and maintain the level of educational achievement of all boys and girls, with special attention to those who, for whatever reason, are failing to acquire the most fundamental tools of elementary education. No plans for decentralization, no 'reconnection' of school and community, no new methods of distributing power or delegating authority for decision-making can have validity unless they help to achieve this central purpose."
>
> Statement adopted by the Board of Regents, March 29, 1968, on New York City school decentralization.

Educational Reform (Continued from page 1)

Elected Officials The City of New York initially turned to decentralization as a means of increasing the amount of financial aid from the state for public schools. The decentralization of the public schools would create multiple school districts, instead of one, and would in this way make public education in the City eligible for increased allotments from the state. Even without pressure from local community groups, some form of decentralization was inevitable.

At the same time, the tremendous costs of education have caused a general move toward increasing the involvement of popularly elected central officials in this sphere of government. While there has been a trend since the days of Tammany Hall political domination to isolate education from politics in order to decrease patronage within the school system, total isolation has never been achieved. The mayor, the governor, and the state legislature continue to have considerable authority, particularly in fiscal matters. No matter what form decentralization takes, this authority is unlikely to be diminished or delegated to local groups. It is even unlikely that there will be a major contest on this front, since the present governmental establishment will receive support for the maintenance of its position not only from traditional sources but also from politically ascending minority groups who see themselves slowly moving into positions of central political power. These minority groups are reluctant to see the central powers diffused at the very time they are beginning to gain central influence and control.

Finally, however, public officials cannot be insensitive to minority group pressures for increased participation in the decisions which influence their lives. These officials sense that some form of school decentralization must be supported. Obviously, they hope that this can be accomplished without destroying their own authority in matters of public education and without too greatly offending the middle-class and majority ethnic coalitions which feel they have less to gain through school decentralization and may have much to lose.

Disenfranchised Poor and Minorities Lower-class communities have become increasingly concerned with redressing their sense of powerlessness. This concern has been directed at participation in the school as an immediate avenue of expression: 1) because it is considered to be an easier entry point than other spheres with more solidified political structures, and 2) because parents have very real and urgent concerns for improving the education which their children are receiving. Their political expressions of interest are now putting pressure on both traditional political leaders and school authorities to make organizational and structural changes in the system. Having lost hope for and interest in educational improvement through ethnic integration in public education, their insistance is for control of the schools in their communities. The meaning of this control ranges from improved arrangements for indigenous group participation and accountability of the schools to local groups, to demands for separate black school systems.

Professional Groups With pressure for change being brought to bear by both elected officials and low-income communities, two groups which have traditionally been opposed have been brought much closer together. In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers (labor), and the Council of Supervisory Associations, and the central staff of the Board of Education (management) have come to represent the more regressive viewpoints in the present struggle. While these groups profess to be willing to make concessions towards receiving a significantly greater input from the school communities, they have shown themselves as intending to preserve most of their present power prerogatives, such as authority in personnel selection, placement and utilization, and over fiscal matters. Their modest support of decentralization in the abstract has been followed by a rejection or sabotage of many specific aspects of the process in concrete instances.

Decentralization and Educational Reform

While the issue of decentralization will have to be solved in some manner by these several groups, it is only tangential to real solutions to the educational problems which face our schools. Decentralization, even as envisioned in the most sweeping proposals, is only a structural approach to reform. As such, it may guarantee that, at least for *awhile*, the bureaucracies will be smaller, more susceptible to change, and probably more responsive to the communities served. But in and of itself, decentralization does not guarantee high quality or even improved education.

To achieve meaningful reform in the education which children receive, at least four conditions must be met. 1) The schools must become accountable to the families and the communities served for the extent to which all children achieve specified educational goals. 2) A shift must be made in the assignment of responsibility for success or failure in learning from total weight on the shoulders of the learner to the majority of weight on the teacher and the school. 3) The educational experience must be made more intellectually, emotionally and socially relevant to the main currents of the child's life. 4) There must be some measure of economic and ethnic integration. Although decentralization in and of itself does not speak to these issues, it may provide the best organizational alternative for allowing work toward the achievement of all of these conditions, with the exception of integration.

Accountability By accountability, we mean a procedure through which all aspects of the school are subject to evaluation by the community served and through which this evaluation will result in change when deemed necessary. Accountability involves ensuring that there are measures to determine whether or not specified objectives are reached in the children, and that channels for change exist when they are not.

It has been suggested that it is a responsibility of the schools to ensure that all children — with the exception of about 5% who are truly mentally defective — reach the level of academic achievement comparable to graduation from a good high school.[4] If the school cannot fulfill this responsibility in the latter half of this century, it shall have ceased to serve society as a socially functional institution. Poverty, poor family background, insufficient environmental supports for learning, may mean that radical changes must be made in the processes of instruction; however, these conditions cannot be excuses for the failure to educate.

Adequate systems of accountability have not been developed in either privileged or underprivileged communities. The teachers and the schools have been free to plod along year after year with little systematic attention given to whether satisfactory products are being wrought with the human material received. Certainly no school has identified its aim as universal achievement of specified academic goals. In low income and minority communities a mere 15% and 20% rate of success as early as the third and fourth grades has been acceptable. Protests and professional concern have re-

sulted in some effort to improve the school's effectiveness. But nowhere have parents been able to say "No!" to the current crop of experimenters or practitioners. Nowhere have they been able to sit down with authority to participate in the review of institutional evaluation data and in the making of decisions about new directions and alternative strategies. Under these conditions the school has been free to conclude that alleged or acknowledged poor results are due to inadequacies in the children and in their homes, and not in the schools and their teachers.

Recently, however, this arrangement has become unacceptable to an increasing number of ghetto communities, where the people have received an endless succession of "innovative" programs which unsuccessfully engineer their lives and perpetuate low achievement as well as feelings of powerlessness. These communities have come to argue that a central condition for meaningful decentralization and significant improvement in urban public education is that power be established to hold the schools accountable for what they do or fail to do for the children.

The Responsibility for Learning In the past, while there has been a clear understanding that teachers differ widely in their ability to teach, the responsibility for the results of instruction have been placed entirely on the student. The term "disadvantaged child" has come to denote a child with particular problems which teachers in inner-city schools are likely to encounter, but it has also been used to relieve teachers of the responsibility for the failure of many of their students. One of the great hopes of those who favor school decentralization — and here "decentralization" is used to include the accountability of the school to the community — is that the responsibility for learning will be placed principally on the teacher and the school.

This shift of responsibility is implicit in the effort to give communities control of the schools and to make the schools accountable to them. The three recent strikes in New York City by the United Federation of Teachers were sparked largely by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community's attempt to hold teachers responsible for failure to achieve certain outcomes which the community expected the school to produce. Although the details of that struggle are dealt with in other parts of this bulletin, it should be noted that the question of due process for the teachers who were asked to be transferred out of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville experimental district has been used to obscure, rather than clarify, the main issues which are responsibility for effective learning and accountability for what the school does to discharge that responsibility.

Obviously, the performance of a teacher depends on his feeling relatively secure in his job; however, this does not obviate evaluations by those who are receiving his services, as well as by colleagues. A medical patient who feels that he is not being adequately treated may change to, or at least consult, another physician. A lawyer who never wins cases soon loses his clientele. A situation which more closely parallels that of teachers is that of public health services administered through hospitals. Here the people served have little voice, but there is a long tradition of peer criticism and evaluation in the clinical pathology conference. Moreover, a new development in health care is the comprehensive community health care project. These projects are being established in urban hospitals in which governing boards of laymen from the community and professionals work together in policy-making and designing services to fit the community's needs. Such participation in the planning and evaluation of services rendered by colleagues and clients—or, in the case of school children, the clients' parents—does not mean a loss of professionalism, as some teachers fear. The authority that comes with professional status cannot be legislated or long maintained through administrative devices; rather, it is a product of how the services are perceived by the people at whom they are aimed.

Professionalism is based on specialized competence, on independence of judgment concerning professional matters, on quality of service rendered, and on responsibility for that competence, that independence of judgment and that service. The concern with professionalism among educators has tended to favor the former two to the neglect of the latter two. Quality of service has not been a critical concern and responsibility for the outcome has been essentially ignored. Decentralization which has as its aim the improvement of education must have as one of its conditions the assumption of major responsibility by the school and its staff for what children learn or fail to learn.

Educational Relevancy In order to be maximally meaningful to a child, education must be relevant in three areas: 1) it must relate to him as an affective being through its materials, experiences and people with which he can identify; his motivation to learn will be more easily tapped when the learning task leads to goals which he perceives himself as valuing; 2) the content and form of the learning experience must be suited to his cognitive style and temperamental characteristics, and must complement his stage of cognitive development; this implies a sensitive determination of the curriculum to be presented as well as the manner in which it is offered to the child; 3) it must have social or utilitarian relevance; i.e. it must offer those skills and competencies which will expand the realm of functional choice available to the child. In this concern with expanding choices it may be necessary to include some educational areas with which he does not immediately identify, since it will be based not only on what he would need for adaptation to society at present, but on projections of what he might need in the future.

Decentralization of the schools is one means of achieving educational relevance in these three areas, since it provides a structure through which communities can decide on the specific capabilities and needs of their children. In a large educational system, one means of creating flexibility and thus enabling the system to become more responsive to a wide variety of populations within it, is through the disbursal of responsibility and authority for educational planning and control to points nearer the beneficiaries. It should be easier for persons who share the culture and values of the families served to evolve educational goals, policies and programs which reflect these ideational commitments. Indeed, it is the eternal hope of school people that the families and communities they serve will show their commitment to the values the school advances. If the values of the community become those of the school, an ideal marriage may be said to have occurred.

It has been the fear of some educators that these more provincial values may be so idiosyncratic and narrow as to render the local school's program irrelevant to the pupil's needs in the broader community. However, the problem need not arise. It is possible to continue the educational trend toward national standards for school achievement at the same time that we allow for wide variation in the specific curriculum content and methodology by which national standards for certain skills, competencies and understandings are met. The Regents Examination in New York City is an example of one

approach to this problem. It is interesting in this regard that thus far the three decentralized school districts in New York City have been extremely cautious in making changes in the basic standards. While some interesting curricular innovations have been instituted, rigorous attention has been paid to the three R's in response to community concern for basic skills mastery.

In general, the emphasis in attempts to provide relevant education has tended to shift back and forth between a stress on cognitive achievement or development and an emphasis on socialization or "development of the whole child", with few attempts to focus on both simultaneously in an integrated manner. In the recent flurry of activity to improve education for disadvantaged learners, considerable effort has been directed at somehow changing cognitive functioning. Unfortunately, to date there has been relatively little success in developing effective tools to shape this area of functioning. At the same time, emerging research is beginning to make more respectable a renewed emphasis on affective (attitudinal and motivational) processes in learning. Evidence suggests, for instance, that there may be a higher degree of plasticity in the affective area than in the cognitive domain,[5] and that in turn changes in the affective area may result in improvements in cognitive functioning.[6] At the same time, this new research is complemented in the political sphere by a greater demand for participation, which is generally considered to result in changed motivation and attitude.[7]

This renewed concern with affect, however, must be distinguished from much of the traditional approach which has concentrated on means of motivating, rather than on ways of using existing motivation. Little attention has been given to providing role models with which the child can identify or to modifying the school so that it and its values have meaning for the child.

Holt pinpoints the alienation of children from the school and the resulting "low level of intelligence" in the following humorous description:

> How do you find out, anyway, whether a child knows his own name? Smiling kindly at him, and speaking in a gentle and reassuring tone of voice, you ask him, "what's your name?" If he doesn't answer, it presumably shows that he doesn't know. Or perhaps, knowing his name, you call him by it. If hearing his name, he makes no move or reply, again it shows that he doesn't know it. Simple.
>
> .....It makes a certain kind of sense to try to judge what a child knows by seeing what he can do, but it leaves out the possibility that he may choose not to show what he can do, that he may decide that at school the safest course is to say and do as little as possible....[8]

Unfortunately, there is little reason under existing conditions of inner-city schools why such a child should be receptive toward learning. More likely than not he has come to school knowing that it is an institution in which his parents have failed and predicting that he himself will fail. While neither he nor his parents have much hope in the schools, both realize that a failure to succeed academically means an end to dreams of moving into the mainstream of society. American history may seem to him a list of platitudes about equality and freedom which have no bearing on the realities he sees around him. Other subjects, which may seem less value-laden, are too remote from the everyday struggles of his life. Each day in class is only a further proof that he cannot beat the system, even if his more privileged peers can.

By bringing parents and other community members into an active role in the school, the school no longer stands as a symbol of the outside world imposing its unattainable values on the child and his community. A participating parent is a parent who actively expresses his interest in his child's educational development. Thus the work of education can be more easily incorporated into the daily life of the family, so that the school is no longer the isolated domain of "education"—a physical and psychological isolation that cannot be maintained if education is to be effective.

With the school integrated into the community and responsive to its needs, those goals and values in education which are incompatible with, or contrary to, the child's life conditions can be changed to become natural extensions of those values and beliefs which already exist in the community. Those goals which are deemed worth striving for—equality, freedom, etc.—can be reflected in the operations of the school, and frank analyses can be made of the ways in which they are or are not upheld in the many areas of life, and of how they might be realized. Under these conditions, the goals and operations of parents, community and schools will be mutually reinforcing.

Integration in the Schools The goal of economic and ethnic integration has received relatively little discussion by advocates of decentralization. Data reported in the reports on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* and *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools* point to the value of economic and ethnic integration for achievement in the school[9,10]. The report on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* also emphasizes the important relationship between a child's feeling that he "controls his own destiny" and academic achievement. This feeling is thought to occur with higher frequency in integrated as opposed to segregated conditions. However, as urban housing patterns now exist, the decentralization of school districts will not greatly influence the level of economic or ethnic separation in the schools. This is especially so since, as practiced, bussing has failed to create a significant level of economic or ethnic integration in the schools of either middle-class or low-income neighborhoods. In fact, it has managed to decrease what little sense of community depressed neighborhoods have by shipping their children out. Middle-class parents have often welcomed the new children into their schools, but they have rarely extended this invitation to other aspects of their community life and, at least as important, have resisted making the exchange even by sending their children into schools in depressed areas.

With our failure to achieve economic and ethnic integration and the low-level likelihood that it will be soon achieved, integration does not rate high as a strategy for improving the quality of education in urban schools. It may be, however, that the very important sense of control over one's destiny can be enhanced in largely segregated schools if they are also a part of a decentralized system where children see their parents and others with whom they can identify exercising control over the decisions which influence their lives. The greater sense of control thought to be associated with integrated school situations may simply reflect the fact that children in such schools tend to come from families where to some degree there is, in fact, a feeling of having a more significant role in decision-making.

As black community leaders have often pointed out, one means of making integration of the schools a possibility is to raise the level of ghetto schools so that they will be competitive with schools in more affluent neighborhoods. When this is accomplished, one of the difficulties of encouraging an in-

flux of white children from middle-class areas will largely be solved. However, the improvement of ghetto schools can probably only become a reality when the people in the community itself care about the schools. It may be, therefore, that economic and ethnic integration will be better served by sacrificing them for the time being to this goal of improved community development.

In summary, decentralization can provide a viable administrative approach to educational reform through bringing the decision-making process concerning schools closer to the school's beneficiaries and making the results of education accountable to those whom the schools serve. At the same time, decentralized school districts may aid in the development of individual communities, many of whom are at present stripped of any leverage in the established power system.

School decentralization need not result in thousands of idiosyncratic, non-negotiable educational backgrounds. Decentralization of schools must take place within the context of the increasing move to achieve national standards for education. With a new approach toward administration of public education, decentralization can provide for the utilization of a wide variety of curricula reflecting the cultural diversity of our population while ensuring that a common level of basic achievement is reached. For those who might feel that the aforementioned educational goals might better be achieved by a centrally controlled system, it should be noted that decentralization of decision-making in public affairs is in the democratic tradition of this nation. Broad representation and participation combined with division and dispersal of decison-making have long been regarded as our bulwarks against autocracy and tyranny and our best vehicles for the advancement of human rights.

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Ghetto Schools Need Black Power*

Edward P. Gottlieb, Ed.D.†

The issue in Ocean Hill-Brownsville is Black Racism against White Racism. And really and truly, both of them are pretty much at their best. The United Federation of Teachers merely wants to continue its chosen missionary work in the ghetto. The emerging Black Community is trying hard, on the other hand, to come out of a coma of cultural imperialism. Both are afraid to admit the reality of their racist positions, and so they grapple in the dark over the tired bodies of a handful of "transferred" teachers.

The union can't see that Negro children must first turn Black, or they will find it almost impossible to get on to a college track in their school work. The white teachers, and most of the Negroes as well, refuse to grasp the psychological insight of Chief Justice Warren who said, "A sense of inferiority affects a child's motivation to learn." More recently, the most extensive educational study ever undertaken *(Equality of Educational Opportunity* by James S. Coleman, Johns Hopkins University, *et alia)* revealed that success in school achievement has little to do with good teachers, or good principals, or smaller class size, or more supplies, or larger budgets, or teaching techniques. What matters most, the study found, is where the child comes from, whom he sits next to, and how much he believes that he has "control over his own destiny." The factor of pupil attitude "appears to have a stronger relationship to school success than do all the school factors together."

It seems rather conclusive that if a Negro child is to succeed well enough in school to get to college he must first have a brand new image of himself, a Black one. This is what many children are hopefully acquiring today through the Ocean Hill-Brownsville theatre of conflict. That is why the days lost in school through strike or boycott are ultimately more educationally profitable than anything they learn from us teachers, Negro or white, through the pen and pencil and notebook syndrome.

In some small measure, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville front line knows the value of a new image for the ghetto child and has tried to supply this by introducing into his school day some history of his people, including something about his African heritage. Unfortunately, the child will no more accept this material in an isolated classroom setting, even from a teacher already "partially Black," than he would take arithmetic from me two hours earlier. As I looked on dejectedly, at the futile efforts of an experienced Black teacher and library specialist, I realized that Negro children are no more willing to be involved in Black history than the Jewish boys of my generation could be interested in the subject matter of their afternoon Hebrew school. It was standard sick humor then for parents to complain that after years of such "study" the "retarded" lad had to be coached in the recitation of the three formal blessings when he had to come up for Bar Mitzvah.

The same boy was quiet as a mouse and quite receptive in the "Christian" public school. He knew that success there is what really counted with his parents, while the Hebrew school for which they paid tuition was merely ritual. Besides, he was rather uncomfortable with his Jewishness in a hostile gentile world, and so he let his teachers, mostly Irish then, brainwash him with what they were proud to call American-

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ism. Thus Benny Leonard the prizefighter or Teddy Roosevelt the Roughrider was my boyhood idol, and not Isaiah the Prophet or Hertzel the Zionist.

So, in this roughly analogous situation at I.S. 55 in Ocean Hill when I asked the rather tall, good-looking, dark-skinned youngster—who had earlier resisted my arithmetic, but now seemed very friendly—who his favorite actors and TV stars were, he rattled off a list of about ten, ALL white.

The school can no more teach Blackness by itself than, as the Coleman Report shows, it can create achievement levels in the other subjects good enough for present college standards. Rhody McCoy and his Governing Board have been unable to see this. They thought they needed nothing more than a Good Will. They really believed that their Negro children had been cheated for years by people who didn't care. In the profession itself, however, these teachers and supervisors were regarded as the most able and dedicated. When, therefore, the new regime no longer had past management to blame, but found, nevertheless, that school work and behavior were deteriorating to such an extent ("more than 20 fires took place in one of our schools—almost always with the teacher in the classroom") and that parents were asking for transfers to other districts, strategy seemed to dictate the transfer of such teachers and supervisors as they had left over from the old but experienced staff. In a gesture of frustration, they tried to transfer 16 of these by sending them to the Central Board for reassignment.

In a very real sense, this was part of "due process", the way all grievances, legal or arbitrary, are initiated by the employer. When two young men trailed me to a Summerhill Conference up state to show me the letter of transfer, I offered to take the next step for them—file a complaint or grievance with the Governing Board against the action of the Administrator.

I had every reason to believe that I would get a respectful hearing before this Board, and as a friend in court, get them their jobs back. I knew from the Guidelines which Ocean Hill, Twin Bridges and the I.S. 201 Project had submitted to the Board of Education two months before (March 26, 1968), that these districts were more than willing to recognize the UFT contract and all its provisions for job security ("under the existing collective bargaining agreement between the United Federation of Teachers and the Board of Education," Article II, Section 4h). The trouble was that while they were willing to recognize Shanker and the UFT, Shanker was not willing to recognize them.

Instead, he took the teachers to Big Brother at 110 Livingston Street, the Board of Education, demanding that the transfers be reversed. By refusing to recognize the jurisdiction of Ocean Hill as an independent decentralized Board, Shanker gave the harassed district a much better issue than the mere inefficiency or lack of cooperation of a few staff members. The community, which was hardly involved in the eight schools until then, slowly began to move behind the Governing Board. (The most depressing thing I saw in my two days of "scabbing" at I.S. 55 in Ocean Hill was the destruction of the trees planted just a few months before on the handsome plaza of the brand-new school. Only five of 16 trees seemed to have any life left. The rest had been uprooted or broken off. It couldn't happen or persist in any Black community with pride in its schools. How could the "loyal" teachers or the "concerned" parents permit the school to stay so ravished?)

At this point, Shanker began to build a career for Rhody McCoy and turn him into a national figure. By sheer multiplication of follies, Shanker also helped to create both community and control where none existed before. The three district "experiments" were aborted out of the unwilling pregnancy of the Board of Education with Decentralization. The following quotation from the plan shows how circumscribed it really was:

"A demonstration district of a small size to involve representatives of the community, parents, and staff more effectively in the conduct of school programs as well as new approaches to teacher training and in curriculum development." (April 3, 1967 — N284)

Only the slimmest nurture of "involvement" was in the meagre breast of the Board of Education. No Control! There was no "community" either, in any meaningful sense. Only a handful of militant Afro-Americans, of whom only a small fraction were really Black, began to struggle with the notion of actual control instead of mere participation in the operation of ghetto schools.

The old girl at 110 Livingston St. tried to abort even as she once fought against the rape . . . but the Ford Foundation came to the rescue of the still-birth with a grant of $44,000 to each of the three "experimental" districts so they could elect a Governing Board in a community that never yet was.

Though the UFT, the Council of Supervisory Associations, and the Board of Education all did their best to ignore the Bundy Report, the Mayor's Plan, and the Regents proposals for Decentralization, Decentralization kept creeping in of its own in all three of the psuedo-experiments. Not because the governing boards fought for it, but because they were pushed into it. Thus they prepared some excellent and tentative "Draft Guidelines" in March of this year, which clearly outlined the areas of operation, the structure of the Governing Board, their functions and responsibilities, relationships with personnel, curriculum planning, budgetary powers, standards of evaluation, enabling legislation at Albany, and even a convention of arbitration. None of the three communities was represented in any degree in the fight for decentralization per se. They gave no cooperation to Harlem CORE and the New York Urban League during the summer and fall of 1967, in the attempt to get an independent school district for Harlem. Nor did they participate in Reverend Galamison's caravan to Albany this past spring. But the UFT gave Ocean Hill the opportunity to blunder into much more decentralization than was defeated by the union's all-out city and state campaign.

Meanwhile, the union smashed itself on its own Rock of Gibraltar. Even as wealth is a moral hazard, so power is a strategic risk. The union had risen rapidly out of powerlessness—which, however, carries its own resources of conviction and dedication. It is being smashed now by its own strength. It needs to be decentralized itself, so its members can have room enough to take their own bearings politically as well as professionally. When the union still had the momentum of its early commitment, it spoke differently in its plan for More Effective Schools:

"The immediate school community must be mobilized for a bootstrap operation. This entails using federal, state, municipal, and neighborhood resources to provide for satisfying patterns of life and work... SCHOOLS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO BE AN ALIEN ISLAND IN AN URBAN VILLAGE. WE DARE NOT PERPETUATE THE CULTURAL IMPERIALISM WHICH HAS CREATED IN MANY CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS SUCH TRAGIC IMPOVERISHMENT AND HOSTILITY DIRECTED BOTH AT THEMSELVES AND SOCIETY..."

Unfortunately, now that the UFT has grown ten times as strong and the council of Supervisors is almost 100% organized, the "professionals" are running scared. Now that they

both have won collective bargaining, they refuse to give the ghetto communities the same say in the education of their children that white towns enjoy all over America. They have won a shabby victory in defeating decentralization, all the while protesting that they were not opposed to it.

If the UFT president really favored decentralization and did not feel it was the central issue of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville dispute, would he have run so quickly to Big Brother at 110 Livingston St.? Wouldn't he rather have dignified decentralization and the Governing Board of Ocean Hill by bringing the grievance of compulsory transfers directly to their table in their very humble surroundings? He could still do so today, for it is recognition that the Governing Boards want and not any persecution of individual teachers. In their plan as outlined in the *Times* of Sept. 24, Board chairman Reverend C. Herbert Oliver proposed: "The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Board and a panel of teachers (elected by other teachers in the district) will handle all personnel matters. Appeals from the decision of this body are to be made either to the Court or the Commissioner of Education."

It bypassed only the Board of Education in such matters, asking, however, that it be given a representative in any collective bargaining agreements between the union and the Central Board.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is Shanker's panicky obsession against decentralization which is driving this wedge between his teachers and the ghetto communities. One could see how racial this action really is by pondering on the turnout at City Hall called by the union. In the thousands of faces parading around the park, I could count only six that were not white. What a terrible price to pay for maintaining the very colonialism the union once deplored, and for denying its own slogan: "Education for Democracy, Democracy in Education".

E. P. G.

Brooklyn Dodgers (Continued from page 1)

Board of Education, are unlikely. The teachers are inclined to blame this on the children, saying that they are unteachable. The parents, understandably, see the case differently.

On the other hand there are the teachers themselves, protected in the present crisis not only by their union but by the tenured supervisory staff of principals and other administrators who have for their part built their own defenses over the years through civil service, political alignments, and elaborate, if informal, traditions of mutual support within their own bureaucracies. These teachers and supervisors argue that they are doing the best they can: that the number of children from broken homes, from backgrounds that are "culturally deprived" and who reflect the anger of their parents toward white teachers makes their work impossible.

This hostility between the embittered parents and the defensive teachers has been growing for years, sustained partly by a temporizing Board of Education whose conventional liberalism had kept it from seeing that the confrontation, when it finally came, would be revolutionary and would not respond to the expedient manipulations on which it had so far relied. The immediate cause of the present strike, for example, was the decision of a group of schools in the Brooklyn ghetto to transfer nineteen teachers who, for whatever reasons, were unacceptable to the local governing board which had been chosen by the parents to supervise their schools. A confidential report, prepared for the Board of Education and released in the last few weeks, reveals that last spring the Board had quietly agreed to transfer the unwanted teachers out of the neighborhood if the local governing board agreed not to make the transfers a matter of principle: in other words, the central Board would get the teachers out of the neighborhood if the local board did not also insist that it was within the right of any community to fire and hire teachers at its own discretion, a right which clearly conflicted with the principles of collective bargaining and job security on which not only the UFT but unionism itself depended.

The decision by the local board to elevate the conflict to the point where the UFT was left with no choice but to intervene on behalf of its general membership was anything but whimsical. The antagonists in the New York school crisis are as wise to each other's maneuvers as the members of opposing professional football teams. Though spectators may be baffled by the various strategies on the field, the participants make their moves with a practiced grace which imparts to the action a kind of predictable formality. The analogy with football breaks down in only one respect: the ball never changes hands. The parents are always on the offensive, while the teachers try to hold the line. When they transferred the

(Continued on page 8)

New York Civil Liberties Union Concerning the transfer of teachers out of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville District.

It must be pointed out that transfers are not ordinarily available to teachers on such an easy basis. The procedures and regulations are complicated and require 12 pages of the contract between the U.F.T. and the Board to explain.[27] In general, the normal contractual procedures are designed to discourage teachers from fleeing ghetto schools. According to the Board of Education, "the present contract with the U.F.T. provides that teachers must serve five years on regular appointment before being eligible for transfer; after this, their names are listed in order of seniority."[28] There are other limits as well, including an absolute prohibition against transfers at teacher school during any one year.[29]

* * * *

Yet, in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the U.F.T. sought to ignore all these procedures and gained the right for unlimited numbers of teachers to transfer out at will for the duration of the initiative of more than 5 per cent of the teachers at any one *experiment, to abandon the experiment for as long as it continued and then to be free to return, presumably when "normal" conditions had been reinstated.* Apparently, the U.F.T. was not very concerned about the disastrous consequences to the experiment that might occur if large numbers of teachers were allowed to leave. Significant numbers of teachers did leave, sometimes in groups large enough to cause serious shortages.

Months later, when the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Local Governing Board attempted to exercise a similar unilateral right of transfer, the U.F.T. cried foul. Yet quite apart from the issues of due process raised by the manner in which the Local Governing Board attempted to transfer 19 teachers and administrators, the U.F.T. appeared to take a position of startling inconsistency. On the one hand, the U.F.T. claimed that due to special conditions in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, teachers should be allowed to bypass all the contractual procedures and transfer out at will. On the other hand, when the Local Governing Board made the same claim (that due to the special conditions of the experiment, it should be allowed to transfer teachers to another district) the U.F.T. expressed indignation and pleaded for strict fidelity to established procedures.

27. Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of New York and United Federation of Teachers, Local 2, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, p20-32.
28. *Tentative Proposals for Decentralization*, Board of Education, August 1968, p.2.
29. UFT Contract, op. cit. (see footnote 27).

nineteen teachers, the Brooklyn parents and their militant leadership decided, at last, to make a rush for the goal, the goal, in this case, being the unequivocal right of the community to hire and fire its own teachers. They did not, however, go so far as to burn down the stadium, an event which is likely to occur if the local governing board is dissolved, as the UFT has urged—and as some members of the central bureaucracy would like.

There have been attempts by the press to discredit the governing board on the grounds that while it was legitimately elected by a significant majority, fewer than 25 percent of the eligible parents bothered to vote. On the other hand this is a greater proportion of voters than participates in primary elections in the same neighborhood. It has also been argued that when the cases of the nineteen teachers had been submitted to a retired Negro judge, the judge found the charges against them to be insubstantial. The governing board has ignored these findings on the grounds that the judge refused to hear important evidence and that the right to decide who should teach in the district belongs to the governing board and not to a retired judge. As this is being written, State Commission of Education James Allen has agreed to suspend the governing board temporarily and the UFT has agreed to the temporary transfer of the teachers, provided the governing board is not restored until the ten teachers are returned to their schools. The danger here is that the temporary vacuum in the district will be filled by genuine extremists whose actions are likely to be unpredictable.[1]

To understand the situation concretely one must try to identify with the individuals concerned: with the teachers who have invested perhaps ten or twenty years in their jobs and who are now totally dependent on them, underpaid, and for the most part unemployable in other capacities; and with the parents, particularly those from the ghetto, whose affection for their children and whose hopes for their futures may be assumed to be like those of parents generally but who are continually exposed to the humiliation and failure to which their children are subjected in the public schools. It is inconceivable that any but the most callous parent would agree with the teachers that his child is ineducable. The more likely, indeed the more rational, expectation is that the parents will find the school at fault and will, in the manner of oppressed groups generally, support leaders who will take matters into their own hands.

The justice of such an expedient is not, of course, lost on the members of New York's upper middle class whose members, because they can afford it and have the right social connections, almost without exception send their children to private schools, partly out of clannishness but increasingly because they too recognize the incompetence of the public schools. There has thus arisen within the city an imperfect but significant alignment between, on the one hand, this class and the racial minorities and, on the other, a rather more deliberate coalition of unionists, civil servants, and their political representatives.

Mayor Lindsay, reflecting the interests of his class but probably at the expense of his interests as a politician, has taken the side of the former group and has, in the last few weeks, reconstructed the Board of Education accordingly. With the reluctant agreement of the state legislature which is ultimately responsible for the city's schools and which, last spring, voted to expand the Board from nine to thirteen members, Lindsay has shifted the balance on the Board so that its majority can no longer be expected to support the interests of the entrenched teachers and supervisors as it had routinely done for years. The aim of Lindsay's new board is to decentralize the system; in other words to shift the power within the system from its central administration to the various communities within the city such as the one in Brooklyn which summarily dismissed the nineteen teachers and precipitated the present strike.

Events, however, have considerably exceeded the Mayor's expectations for in transferring the nineteen teachers the Brooklyn group had obviously decided not to await the orderly transfer of power which the new board promised, a decision which somewhat recalls the case in Russia when the soviets chose not to stay put for the deliberations of the provisional government. As this is being written it seems unlikely that the contested teachers, of whom only ten are still on the scene, the others having discreetly withdrawn, will be permitted to re-enter their schools; nor are the police in this case likely to figure as a counter-revolutionary force, for while some school supervisors have been heard to suggest that what New York needs in the present emergency is a more aggressive Mayor than John Lindsay, it is hard to imagine that Lindsay will permit the police to drag the parents, who have so far

New York Civil Liberties Union
The Burden of Blame: A Report on the
Ocean Hill-Brownsville School Controversy,
October 9, 1968.

The New York Civil Liberties Union supports school decentralization as a means of giving ghetto communities equal access to the process of making decisions vitally affecting the education of their children. We are also deeply committed to due process of law and academic freedom. We do not find any inconsistency in our support for decentralization and our commitment to due process and academic freedom. Indeed, we find the charge that existing standards of due process are seriously threatened by community control unfounded, both in theory and in fact.

Specifically, our research leads us to the following basic conclusions:

1) That from the beginning, *the central board of Education attempted to scuttle the experiment in Ocean Hill-Brownsville* by consistently refusing to define the authority of the Local Governing Board;
2) *That the United Federation of Teachers has used "due process"* as a smokescreen to obscure its real goal, which is to discredit decentralization and sabotage community control;
3) That there are serious shortcomings in existing Board of Education standards of due process, which have long permeated the entire school system; and that to the degree that the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Board violated due process, it did so only by following normal standards and procedures of the Board of Education;
4) That the major burden of blame for the chaos in Ocean Hill-Brownsville must fall on the central Board of Education and, lamentably, the United Federation of Teachers.

[1]While the original issue in the strike had been the decision of the local board to transfer the ten teachers, the local board had also, over the summer, hired some 200 additional teachers, many black but the majority white, to replace members of the regular staff who, for various reasons, did not satisfy the governing board. [Most of them had simply failed to fill their classroom assignments, leaving the school without notice. Ed.] The local board now insists on firing 100 of these regular teachers whose places have been taken by the new appointees, most of whom are not union members and many of whom are recent college graduates who presumably have not satisfied the city's licensing requirements for teachers. Thus, while the State Commissioner has attempted to side-step the issue agreeing to transfer the ten teachers temporarily out of the district, the governing board, which has also been temporarily dismissed by the State Commissioner but which refuses to accept the Commissioner's authority, has escalated the conflict by demanding that the 100 teachers be sent out of the district too. Meanwhile the central bureaucracy has stupidly made matters worse by demanding that the governing board dismiss the teachers it had hired over the summer.

prevented the teachers from entering their classrooms, away from the schoolhouse door.[2]

When the strike was first announced, however, Mayor Lindsay did briefly seem to have persuaded or forced the local governing board to let the teachers return to their classes. He did this, presumably, by threatening to dissolve the local board, and call for new elections, but the board's agreement under this pressure included the implied threat that it could not speak for other leaders in the neighborhood or for the more militant residents. Nevertheless Lindsay's assurances that the local board had given in were sufficient for the union to agree to call off its strike, provided also that the central Board agree that the rights of teachers throughout the city would be protected as the system decentralized.

To many advocates of decentralization such an undertaking on the part of the central Board seemed to ignore the fundamental condition of decentralization itself: that parents should be free to decide who should educate their children. Thus two of Lindsay's new appointees to the central Board voted against the agreement. These were Hector Vasquez, a Puerto Rican businessman, and Milton Galamison, a militant and highly sophisticated black leader who had opposed the school system for years and who recognized that in accepting the Union's terms, the Board would effectively foreclose the possibility of genuine decentralization, the very purpose for which it had been reconstituted by Mayor Lindsay. Nevertheless a majority of Board members, including two other Lindsay appointees, voted for the agreement, though John Lotz, a holdover from the pre-Lindsay Board but himself a strong advocate of decentralization, cast his vote under protest. Presumably he, like the Mayor, wanted to end the strike and hoped that the new Board could manage, despite the self-defeating deal with the union, to turn control over to the neighborhoods by some sort of future compromise.

As it turned out, none of this made any difference. When the ten teachers attempted to return to their classes their way was blocked by an angry demonstration. Only armed force could have got them safely into the school. Furthermore, their places had been taken by new teachers recruited by the local board. Amid accusations that Lindsay had gone back on his word, the union resumed its strike. The union's accusations, however, were gratuitous. There was nothing that Lindsay or anyone else could do. The Brooklyn board had rebelled and the conventional remedies—the police and the withdrawal of public funds from the ghetto schools—were obviously unthinkable.

Thus, the crisis in New York has been elevated to a conflict of opposing principles reflecting powerful and apparently irreconcilable class interests: the interest of the excluded class in improving its position through the education of its children; and the interest of an established, if largely ineffective, professional group in maintaining the prerogatives which it had won through bitter struggles of its own, even though this group now seems to stand in the way of legitimate ambitions of the emerging class boiling up just beneath it. In such circumstances a satisfactory political compromise is hard to imagine. Nor, of course, can the conflict be arbitrated as if it were a conventional dispute between labor and management, for in this case labor and management are on the same side, confronting an angry and deeply disaffected clientele. It is also unlikely that Mayor Lindsay's new board can keep abreast of the crisis, for even if the present strike is settled the result will offer only a temporary solution. The issue will inevitably erupt again and again as one neighborhood after another supports leaders who will claim the right to decide who shall educate its children.

Yet it is premature and, in any case, frivolous to conclude that the apocalypse is at hand, for out of such crises as this there often arise solutions which previously had remained invisible or seemed unspeakable. For instance, decentralization is already a fact in three New York neighborhoods: the Two Bridges district in Lower Manhattan, a district in central Harlem surrounding the by now famous I.S. 201, and, for better or worse, the currently disputed district in Brooklyn. While nearly all the schools in New York have been closed by the present strike, the schools in these districts have functioned normally under their locally appointed leadership and, according to reports in the press and from other observers, the teaching in them, largely by non-union faculties, has been livelier than is generally the case in New York schools.

The outcome of the present conflict will probably, or so one hopes, encourage a variety of educational experiments, perhaps some of them along the lines suggested some years ago by Milton Friedman, the conservative economist at the University of Chicago. Friedman's idea was that parents of school age children be given vouchers worth a year's schooling, to be redeemed in any legitimate institution they might choose. Thus all parents could enjoy a version of the privilege which the parents of private school children had long since claimed for themselves.

The advantage in Professor Friedman's proposal and the reason that it arises from his generally conservative outlook is that it promises to restore the principle of competition to a marketplace which is currently monopolized by a single, overpowering institution and which, since it has no competitors, except for the handful of private schools, can remain as complacent as it likes. The effect of the impasse in New York City is that the monopolistic system is now incapable of performing even the minimal functions which have routinely been expected of it. It cannot be trusted to keep the children off the streets and out of their parents' way nor can it continue to pretend that it is performing an educational service at all. In such circumstances, since the lives of their children are at stake, one would expect the parents to begin contriving educational alternatives of their own.

Professor Friedman's system of vouchers is, of course, unworldly and was evidently suggested for polemical purposes. Nevertheless, the proposed decentralization of the New York school system implies, at least in theory, a similar strategy. While blank checks would not be handed out to individual parents, they would, in a genuinely decentralized system, be given to individual school districts to spend as the parents, represented by their community boards, saw fit. To many of the paternalistic proprietors of the present system, such an expedient must seem not only a threat to their personal security, but evidence of insanity, for the unspoken assumption of the liberal majority which has traditionally dominated public education in New York is that the poor, particularly the blacks, are not only rather hard to educate but they are constitutionally incapable of running their own institutions. Thus last month when it was a matter of electing a new Board President, Lloyd Garrison, a distinguished lawyer, an impeccable liberal, and a former Board President, placed in nomination the name of Rose Shapiro, a holdover from the pre-Lindsay board, whose advocacy of decentralization has been, to say the least, disingenuous, and whose singlehearted project as a Board member has been to preserve the existing

[2]For further insight into the mentality of the New York City School supervisors, see the extensive interview between Walter Degnan, the President of the Supervisors Association, and the Ocean Hill administrator, Rhody McCoy, in the opening issue of *The New York Advocate*, a journal of New York affairs that will appear later this month.

institution from any change whatever.

Yet, in the past three years a group of Harlem street-workers, many of whom are themselves school dropouts, have managed, with the help of the Urban League of Greater New York, to establish a series of store-front schools whose success has been exemplary. These schools have recruited, largely from East Harlem's Benjamin Franklin High School, several hundred incipient dropouts and have, in the last two years, sent more than a hundred of them on to college. These Street Academies, as they are called, are staffed mostly by teachers who are not licensed by the City of New York. Though they are all college graduates and many of them are experienced teachers, most of them have not passed the ritual examinations which New York City teachers are required to pass and few of them have been trained in teachers' colleges. They are, by the standards of the city schools, unprofessional. Yet these amateurs, several of whom are former members of the Peace Corps, have clearly succeeded where their professional counterparts have failed.

They have, in effect, contrived out of the wreckage of the Harlem public schools, a system of demonstrably successful private schools which suggest not only that the idea of professionalism in education is of dubious validity but that the ghetto can perfectly well, if left to its own devices, create and manage its own institutions without the help of a centralized authority. These schools were financed originally by the Ford Foundation and have been supported since by several private corporations. If the decentralization of the public schools is to have any meaning at all, public funds should now be made available for similar undertakings, and not in the ghettos alone. For the retreat from the public schools is evident throughout the city and one hears nearly every week of groups of parents who have decided to set up schools of their own.

Professor Friedman's voucher system derives from his conservative bias against monopolistic public institutions, but there is nothing in his scheme to contradict more recent notions of participatory democracy, which follows from traditions of community anarchism and radical populism. What we seem to be undergoing, not simply in the public schools but in the country generally, is a spontaneous and apparently irresistible surge of democratic fundamentalism, arising from a revulsion toward established social and political institutions. As Professor Friedman's conservatism comes full circle to emerge as a version of anarchism, so the advocates of law and order with their implication of frontier justice and their hatred of the Supreme Court are the ideological poor relations of the Yippies with their universal disdain for social institutions of every kind. While it should be obvious that these forces will remain bitterly opposed to each other, they neverthless indicate a tendency against which the fortunes of the public school bureaucracies in New York and the other great American cities seem even less promising than those of Hubert Humphrey and his residual New Deal liberalism.

Who can say what political structures, if any, will emerge from such chaos? But in the isolated case of the New York City public schools there are provisional grounds for hope. It was Dewey's idea that the world itself is a sufficient school for most purposes. One learns by taking part in the world's work: to exclude experience from the process of learning is to exclude learning itself. It was Dewey's misfortune, and ours, that he submitted his proposals at the very moment when the schoolteachers were insisting that they had become a professional class, that education was a process which began on weekday mornings at eight and ended at three, and that unsupervised events outside the school room were not only incapable of offering illumination but were actually distractions from the pedagogical process.

In the present collapse of the New York City schools there is some hope, if there are individuals to seize the opportunity, that the discredited professionalism, which public education has claimed for itself, may now begin to give way to an unpredictable variety of educational enterprises arising from the trials and errors of the various communities within the city. Obviously there are plenty of hazards to be encountered in these experiments, including the real danger, especially in the poorer neighborhoods, that the ambitions of the parents for their children's success will lead to an authoritarian and abstract academicism, contrary to Dewey's notions. But it is also reasonable to expect parents—especially those who have fought so bitterly against the present system—to learn from their errors, as the professional educators have seemed unable to do, what is likely to be in the best interest of their children. At any rate, there must, at this moment, be thousands of young students in New York who are learning more, from their everyday experience, about the nature of political systems and the complex meanings of democracy than they could ever learn if they were back in their classrooms reading the official myths of American history. **J. E.**

New York Civil Liberties Concerning Due Process:

In attempting to understand why the attempted transfer was so widely perceived as an attempted firing, it is important to examine the distinction between transfer and dismissal in the Board of Education By-Laws.[35]

* * * *

Dismissals must be accompanied by the requirements of due process, including written notice of charges, right to a hearing, right to confront witnesses, right to call witnesses, right to introduce evidence, right to receive transcript, right to appeal, etc.[36] The By-Laws mandate these requirements for regular teachers and the U.F.T. contract extends the requirements to substitute teacher.[37] *But neither the By-Laws nor the contract mandate the requirements of due process for mere transfers.* Article II, Section 101.1 of the By-Laws says:

> Transfers of members of the teaching and supervising staff from one school to another shall be made by the Superintendent of Schools, who shall report immediately such transfers to the Board of Education for its consideration and action.[38]

The purpose of this provision is apparently to allow the Superintendent maximum flexibility to move teachers around for a variety of reasons.

Implicit in the provision is the assumption that the right to a job does not include the right to choose your assignment within the system. In fact, many hundreds of such transfers take place during every school year, apparently without the U.F.T.'s objection. Why then did the U.F.T. make such a fuss in this case and insist on due process when it knew that due process was not required under existing procedures?

The answer is clear: the U.F.T. demanded due process becaused it wished to create the impression that the teachers had been fired and because it wished to discredit the Local Governing Board. This conclusion is hardly speculative. In many of its advertisements, the U.F.T. has used the word "fired." Furthermore, the Niemeyer Report bluntly states the U.F.T. motive:

> "... the U.F.T. demanded written charges, thus placing the request for transfers (for which no charges are required) into the realm of dismissal."[39]

35. By-laws of the Board of Education of the City of New York
36. By-laws, Section 105 a.1.
37. UFT Contract, Article IV, Section F, Paragraph 15 b,c.
38. By-laws, Article II, Section 101.1.
39. Niemeyer Report, p94.

"Due Process...Civil Liberties...and the Public Schools"

Excerpts from a statement by the Ad Hoc Committee for Justice in the Schools issued during the 4th week of the strike. This committee, formed largely by prominent labor leaders in the New York area, contests some of the conclusions arrived at by the New York Civil Liberties Union.

■ The letter received by the teachers said: "The Governing Board of Ocean Hill-Brownsville Demonstration School District has voted to *end your employment* in the schools of this District...*This termination of employment* is to take effect immediately." [Emphasis added]....

The argument that the teachers were merely transferred rests flimsily upon this sentence in the letter of dismissal: "You will report Friday morning to Personnel, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, for reassignment."

By any accepted definition transfer means movement *from* one job *to* another by prearrangement. Yet the Personnel Bureau *knew nothing of these alleged transfers and had no jobs waiting for the "transferred" teachers. Nor had the teachers been forewarned of this action.*

* * * * * *

■ The Superintendent can transfer teachers without due process only in cases of *voluntary transfer.* (Obviously the Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers were not voluntary transfers.) *Involuntary* transfers are another matter....

■ Even if the Superintendent had the power to transfer without due process, his powers are *not* transferred to the Unit Administrators under present law—whether the NYCLU thinks they *should* be or not.

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■ Even if, under decentralization, a Unit Administrator had all the powers within his district that the Superintendent has within the city, he could no more transfer a teacher to *another* district by unilateral action than the Superintendent can transfer a teacher to Yonkers!

As for involuntary transfers, there are certain procedures to be followed—procedures which not even the Superintendent can violate and which have never been ignored or challenged before in our city. (They were challenged in a mid-West city which attempted a mass transfer of black teachers, and the union stood up for the teachers.)

Indeed, large sections of the teachers' contract make sense only if one assumes the unchallenged existence of such procedures. For example:

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■ The section dealing with seniority rights specifically explains the basis on which teachers can be involuntarily transferred.

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■ The section on the rights of regularly assigned substitutes specifically provides them with protection against arbitrary transfer without due notice, written charges, hearings, etc. This would make no sense if tenured teachers had less.

■ Punitive transfers involve a U rating, and this requires specific charges that can be appealed to a board hearing, and finally to Commissioner Allen or to the courts.

These procedures were not observed in Ocean Hill-Brownsville precisely because the Governing Board was *not* interested in getting the teachers transferred. According to Mr. John Niemeyer (whose report the NYCLU repeatedly cites). the Board of Education had promised last spring to transfer quietly any teachers who were unacceptable to the Governing Board. But, as Mr. Niemeyer asserted, "The Governing Board was determined to prove it had control of the schools by circumventing normal procedures..."(*New York Times,* September 14).

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An anti-UFT ad argues that:

"Under due process, exactly twelve teachers have been fired in the last five years: Impartial men must come to the conclusion that the UFT's version of due process does not work in a school system of over 60,000 teachers when only twelve miscreants are found in five years."

The fact is that under the prevailing practice—and this is not "the UFT's version of due process"—most poor teachers are not fired in hearings but are weeded out by principals in face-to-face meetings. The teachers are customarily given the option of leaving before charges are brought against them. In addition, many poor teachers simply quit when they realize that they cannot do their job.

This procedure is not satisfactory; nonetheless the same *percentage of poor teachers is let go in New York City as in the decentralized local districts throughout the country.*

The UFT has stated, and we agree, that *there are teachers who should be removed from the school system.* Moreover, the Union believes that teachers—*and* supervisors, administrators and all public officials—should be held accountable to the public for their performances. Accordingly, the Union has proposed:

1) A *public review board* to which parents can bring complaints and charges against teachers on nonprofessional matters (e.g., abusing a child, using racial epithets, etc.).

2) The development of *objective* tests to compare teachers' performances with children of various socio-economic backgrounds. These tests need not be exercises in mystification or in mass psychoanalysis of teachers; they need not rest upon vague impressions of personal radiance. They can be fair and effective, and we can begin work on them immediately.

Continued on page 12

3) *Additional training and supervision* of those teachers who consistently fall below par in the teaching of children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. If those teachers do not consequently improve, they should be removed from the system.

4) *An internship program* that would give new teachers a *real* probationary period. Right now they are thrown into classrooms with full teaching loads, to sink or swim. A new teacher should carry only half a load the first year, spending the rest of his time working with experienced teachers. The load should gradually be increased to a full load in the third year, at the end of which tenure would be determined.

At this moment it is Mayor Lindsay and the Board of Education whose policies most endanger the future of decentralization. If they persist in evading their lawful responsibility to protect the rights of teachers, decentralization will be construed as abrogating due process, granting local groups the right to hire and fire teachers arbitrarily, and surrendering the schools to demagogic extremists.

Decentralization will become synonymous in the public mind with all of the ugliness we have seen on television. The original misgivings over decentralization will be intensified, and decentralization may be struck down by the Legislature.

But if due process and teacher unionism are upheld, earlier misgivings will be proven groundless and decentralization can be made workable.

We agree that the school system of New York is not meeting the needs of our children, especially those of low income and minority groups in the ghettos. We share the indignation of the parents in Ocean Hill-Brownsville — and Harlem and every other ghetto — whose struggle for quality education for their children has again and again run up against a brick wall of bureaucratic indifference and poverty of imagination.

We do not proclaim these sentiments to be diplomatic — this is not the time for cheap talk — but because we feel them sincerely. And we believe the UFT does too.

The terrible tragedy is that while urban education deteriorates, forces that should be working together in a vigorous fight for better schools are fighting each other.

For the sake of our children, for the sake of our schools, for the sake of our teachers, for the sake of our city, there must be a reconciliation.

A genuine and lasting reconciliation, we believe, is only possible within a framework of school decentralization that respects the rights of all parties. This means:

1) There must be an *authentic community voice* in the schools regarding curricula and other matters of educational policy.

2) There must be central certification and placement of teachers to ensure minimum professional standards and adequate distribution of personnel to meet the needs of the entire city.

3) Dismissal of teachers should be a local function, based on due process and subject to review procedures.

4) There must be objective procedures for spotting teachers who cannot effectively teach children of minority groups. Such teachers should get additional training or be weeded out —with due process.

5) There must be an end to vigilantism in the schools. Threats and intimidation must stop — now and without question. Our schools must be cleansed of *all* forms of racism.

If decentralization is to succeed, and we earnestly hope that it will, these principles must be implemented forthwith in Ocean Hill-Brownsville — and the Mayor and the Board of Education must see that they are. The important thing is that the teachers' strike be ended through a fair and equitable settlement and that all of the parties join together to make decentralization work.

Even then our problems will not be solved, for decentralization is no panacea — though it is frequently offered as one. It is no substitute for massive social investments of billions of dollars to provide remedial programs, improve physical plants, upgrade faculties, construct new schools — in short, to give our children the best education possible.

Beyond this, we must work at every level for the elimination of slums and poverty, for the rebuilding of our cities, and for the eradication of all those conditions of social and economic inequality that now weigh so crushingly on the education of our children.

To achieve these goals, parents, teachers and community groups will have to forge a strong alliance. They will have to organize and stand together, black and white, overcoming the bitterness and frustration that now separate them.

To this end we pledge our help and ask yours.

Ad Hoc Committee for
Justice in the Schools

The Mason-Dixon Line Moves to New York

Reprinted from *I. F. Stone's Weekly*,
November 4, 1968.

On my way into New York City from La Guardia, the taxi driver told me his daughter after a first year as teacher in a black ghetto had transferred out to Long Island in despair. "The children were wonderful," he said. "The trouble was the parents." An hour later at lunch a Jewish school teacher from Brooklyn complained of the black children in her mathematics class for slow learners but said the black parents, when she called on them for help, were without exception not only cooperative but grateful. But teacher and taxi-driver agreed in blaming Mayor Lindsay, though just for what was not clear. Indeed very little in New York's crisis is clear, perhaps because the real motivations are kept hidden as shameful. More and more people, particularly among the striking teachers, and in the Jewish community, are flailing about in hysteria. A sample: I asked the Brooklyn schoolteacher just what was the issue in the strike. She replied with appalling simplicity, "Anti-Semitism." How do you win a strike against anti-Semitism? By circumcising all gentiles and turning Black Muslims into Black Jews? "What does Mr. Shanker want," the Mayor asked in a similar vein in a radio interview next day, "For the police vans to come into the [Ocean Hill-Brownsville] community, arrest them and send them to New Jersey?" Is the Exodus to be re-enacted, this time with a black cast?

A Genius With Two Heads

The plain truth is that John V. Lindsay is in trouble because he suddenly finds himself the Mayor of a Southern town. The Mason-Dixon line has moved north, and the Old Confederacy has expanded to the outer reaches of the Bronx. Even without this tide of racism, it would take a genius with two heads to govern the city successfully. Some of its basic problems are universal. One is size. Another is bureaucracy; the educational bureaucracy has entrenched itself in a maze of regulations beyond effective public control. A third is poverty; by next year one of every eight New Yorkers will be on relief. The city is choked with automobiles and people. Even if all eight million were a multiple birth from the same mamma, they would aggravate the hell out of each other. But in New York as elsewhere those of a different color, whether black or Puerto Rican, are no longer willing to accept second or third class citizenship submissively. They are pushing upwards into the better jobs and the sunnier places. In New York, the country's, and the world's biggest Jewish city, this has created a special problem—a confrontation between blacks and Jews. This is rapidly turning Lindsay into the world's most downtrodden WASP.

The defeat two years ago of his proposal for a civilian review board to hear complaints against the police was the first disturbing signal in what had been the most liberal city in the country. New York's lower middle class whites were reacting like their counterparts elsewhere. In the struggle over schools the fears have now spread to liberal teachers hitherto sympathetic to the civil rights movement. Conflicts in the ghetto with Jewish landlords and storekeepers were relatively easy to contain. But the teachers' strike has churned up fears in an educational establishment that Jewish teachers and principals have dominated for a generation. Now that black unrest seems to threaten union standards and their jobs they are reacting like less liberal and less intellectual "ethnic" groups. The Teachers' Union is moving closer to the benighted old-line A.F. of L. craft unions. A formidable anti-black coalition is shaping up. One of its victims may be the good name of the Jewish community.

If this great city is to be saved from race war, more Jewish intellectuals are going to have to speak up in ways that their own people will resent, just as white southerners resented those who spoke up for the Negro. The Teachers Union is exaggerating, amplifying and circulating any bit of anti-Semitic drivel it can pick up from any far-out black extremist, however unrepresentative, and using this to drive the Jewish community of New York into a panic. Albert Shanker and the Teachers Union are exploiting natural Jewish fears of anti-Semitism in order to win the community's support for the strike and for its major objective, which is to prevent effective decentralization and community control of the school system. Unless more Jewish leaders speak up in public and say what they do in private, this manufactured hysteria may prove a disaster for both the black and the Jewish communities. Peoples, like Generals, tend to be obsessed by their last war. To hear some New York Jews talk one would think the America of 1968 was the Germany of 1932. They do not see that they themselves are caught up in the backlash which is creating in Wallace the nearest American counterpart to Der Fuehrer, that they are joining the red-necks, that the danger lies in white racism not black. The latter is despairing and defensive; the former holds the potential of a new Nazism in its efforts to maintain white supremacy. It would be eternally disgraceful were Jews this time to be among the Brown Shirts.

A Visit to Ocean Hill-Brownsville

To visit the black controlled schools which have stirred such forebodings on both sides of the controversy is like waking from a nightmare. I spent Friday, Oct. 25, in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, observing classes and talking with teachers and principals in JHS 271 and its intermediate school neighbor, IS 55, and the visit was therapeutic. It was a day without pickets and I saw only one policeman. The atmosphere was incredibly different from what I had been led to expect. I found black and white teachers, Jewish and gentile, working together not just peacefully but with zest and comradeship. The cleanliness and the neat clothing of the children reflected well on the homes from which they came. The classes were orderly. There was none of that screaming, by teacher against pupil, and among the children, which is common in most New York schools. I felt at the end of the day that the racial and union issues were terribly overblown and that the real concern within the embattled district was simply to create effective schools. I saw no reason why this could not be reconciled with proper union standards and I felt it would be a tragedy if this experiment in community control were shut down.

I watched a Mrs. Naomi Levinson teach an English class full of eager black children. I read some of the touching poems and essays they had produced. "It's the first time in my eight

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Mason-Dixon (Continued from page 13)

years as a teacher," she told us proudly, "that I have been allowed to use unconventional teaching methods." I talked with another teacher, Leon Goodman, whose face lit up with pleasure when he explained the new methods of teaching science he was allowed to apply. "We get them to think rather than simply to copy down abstractions from the blackboard." Both impatiently denied that they had encountered any anti-Semitism.* I sat in on a teacher-team conference of five English teachers, three black, two white, one of the whites a delicate-featured blonde WASP, the other an intense and dark-eyed Jew. The two whites were volunteers. One of them had brought a bongo drum into the classroom to use with the reading of Vachel Lindsay's incomparably rhythmic "'Congo" as a way to awaken the children to the wonders of poetry. The atmosphere of this mixed group was wholly devoid of any racial self-consciousness or tension. One felt their pleasure in working together. In the corner of one classroom we watched a young black teacher with a group of children who took turns at reading "The Prince and the Pauper". On the blackboard was the assignment, "Write a story about something that went wrong in a person's life" and next to it in a row there were the helpful hints, "No money. Sickness. No food. No light. No home. No friends. No job." The words telescoped the familiar annals of the ghetto.

The only racialism, if it can be called that, was in the evidence of efforts to awaken black pride. There were some vivid water colors produced in a new painting class and exhibited in a hallway as "Soul on Paper". Another hallway blackboard had "Black Is Beautiful" written not only in French and Spanish but in Greek, Hebrew, Punjabi, Swahili, Arabic and Esperanto. One room's walls were covered with pictures and clippings variously headed "Religion, Statesmen, Musicians, Scientists, Inventors, Diplomats" showing black achievement in these fields.

In the classroom where Leslie Campbell in an African gown over his normal clothes teaches Afro-American studies there were posters showing "Our Homeland" and "Our Proud and Glorious Past". They reminded me of Zionist posters in many Jewish Sabbath schools. There were also posters of "The Proud Look" and "Black Pictures of Christ." Campbell after class was friendly and open. He described himself as a black nationalist revolutionary but said he found himself very much in a minority on the faculty. "Most of my black colleagues," he said, "are simply educationists" though they agree on African studies for its psychological value. The other teacher of Afro-American Studies at JHS 271, Alan Kellock, turned out to be a young white man who has studied in Egypt and Ghana and is finishing a doctorate in African history for the University of Wisconsin. He said he had encountered no racial prejudice in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. What purpose did he see in Afro-American history courses? "To get the black children to feel they are worthwhile people. To give them a sense of identity and dignity." Kellock obtained his teaching license last summer. He feels JHS 271 is the most promising place to teach in the entire city.

Teachers Go Sour, Children Lose Interest

David Rogers in his blockbuster of a new book, *"110 Livingston Street: Politics and Bureaucracy in the New York City School System"* quotes an authoritative earlier professional study of the city's schools by Strayer and Yavner. "The greatest failing of the schools today," they found as he did, "is the failure to use the creative ability of teachers." When I read this afterwards, I understood the enthusiasm I had found in the two schools I visited. I had thought of community control as a kind of lesser evil, a way of appeasing black dissatisfaction. I did not realize what a dead hand the bureaucracy has fastened on the schools and how much could be done just by lifting it. "Not many teachers come into the system sour," said Percy Jenkins, the Virginia-born Negro who is now principal of IS 55, "but they don't stay long without becoming sour. The kids come in with lively minds but by the fourth grade they too have lost interest." Jenkins himself, a graduate of West Virginia State College, had been in "the system" 15 years and risen to assistant principal before he was chosen to head IS 55 in this community control experiment. "What you see here," one white teacher explained later, "is a function of the principal, of the fresh directions he maps out and of the commitment brought to this experiment by young liberal arts college volunteers with new ideas."

I spoke with Rhody McCoy, the head of the district; with his assistant, Lloyd Hunter; with the principal of JHS 271, Wm. H. Harris, and with his white assistant principal, John Mandracchia. I have never met a more devoted group of people. All of them are harassed and overworked but sustained by a combination of desperation and joy, desperation because they fear the experiment may soon be wiped out under union pressure, joy in a chance to demonstrate in the little time they have what community control could accomplish. They are enlightened men; one forgets all the nonsense of black and white in talking with them; color vanishes. They fear black extremism as much as white misunderstanding. *And their focus is on the child.*

That cannot be said of their opponents. The child, whether black or white, seems to be the forgotten bystander in the teachers' strike. The Union's rallying cry is "due process", i.e. for teachers and its concern is their tenure. Its alliance is not with the parents for better education but with the employing bureaucracy for the maintenance of their common privileges. The "due process" issue they have raised is a monumental bit of hypocrisy. The best analysis of it may be found in the report by the New York Civil Liberties Union, "The Burden of Blame." The unsatisfactory teachers were *transferred,* not discharged, and transfers normally are made without hearing or charges; the teachers prefer it that way, to keep their records free from blemish.

The real problem is how to keep teachers *in* ghetto schools. The Board of Education regulations are designed to discourage teachers from fleeing them. The contractual procedures between the Board and the Union limit the teacher's freedom to transfer. "Yet," the civil liberties union reported, "in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the UFT sought to ignore all these procedures and claimed the right for unlimited numbers of teachers to transfer out at will for the duration of the experiment, to abandon the experiment for as long as it continues and then to be free to return, presumably when 'normal' conditions had been reinstated. . . . Significant numbers of teachers did leave . . . Months later, when the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Local Governing Board attempted to exercise a similar unilateral right of transfer, the UFT cried foul."

The Board of Education's notions of "due process" are as one-sided. I have read the full text of the decision handed down by Judge Francis E. Rivers as trial examiner in the case of the transferred teachers. It is by no stretch of the imagination the vindication it appears to be in the headlines.

The hearing, by screening out all but professional witnesses, and barring not only parent testimony but that of para-professional school aides, and by applying strict rules of evidence unsuited to administrative procedures, managed to acquit the

They Fear Democracy

teachers without any real exploration of the charges against them.

The Board of Education is past master at manipulating regulations and procedures to achieve the ends it seeks. The Rogers book shows how hard it is even for teachers and principals to find out how it operates. Only a Kafka could do justice to the murk it generates. In a column on Due Process in the *New York Post* Oct. 24, Murray Kempton provided an incisive glimpse of these operations in the proceedings now underway against four JHS 271 teachers accused of threats, or acts of terror, against attempts to reinstate the transferred teachers. Their attorneys were forbidden to see the reports on which the charges were based. When one attorney asked, "Do you proceed under any rules and regulations?" the reply was "We do not." After all this talk about due process, Kempton commented, "we suddenly discover that in this system there is no protection for anybody except the conscience and good-will of the Superintendent."

All bureaucracies are secretive, none more so than the New York Board of Education. The Rogers book is an eye-opener, particularly in its account of how desegregation was sabotaged by the Board. It did not work, Rogers concludes "because the bureaucracy and the staff made them fail." It was out of the frustration created by the failure of integration that black and Puerto Rican parents turned to community control. This, too, is being sabotaged by the Board and by the union. They fear the loss of power and privilege if democracy is substituted for bureaucracy. They have the support of all the unions which do business with the educational system, a billion dollar business. The New York trade union movement, like its educational establishment, has been a stronghold of white supremacy. This is where and how the racial issue arises, and the Jewish community is being enlisted because teaching has been a Jewish preserve in New York as it was once an Irish Catholic preserve. If community control is crushed, the racial struggle will take on more violent and hateful forms to the detriment of both the black and Jewish communities.

The Jews, as the more favored and privileged group, owe the underprivileged a duty of patience, charity and compassion. It will not hurt us to swallow a few insults from overwrought blacks. It is no more wrong to invoke the better Jewish tradition against Jewish bigotry than to invoke the better American tradition against white racism. The genocidal threat, if any, in this situation lies in the slow death and degredation to which so many blacks and Puerto Ricans are doomed in our slums. To wipe out the slums and help save their occupants would be the truest memorial to those who died in Auschwitz. When an idealistic young Mayor and the Rabbi who tried to defend him are howled down in a synagogue, it is time for the slap that can alone bring hysterics to their senses. Lindsay was saying "a Jewish philosopher—" when he was forced to leave. The philosopher he was about to quote was Spinoza. He, too, was thrown out of the synagogue in his time. We ought to have better sense today.

Oct. 29

I. F. S.

*About three-fourths of the non-striking teachers in Ocean Hill-Brownsville are white and about one half of these are Jewish.

Official Statements Regarding Decentralization

The following summaries represent the original official plans for decentralization of the major interested parties in New York City. In addition to the groups mentioned below, a number of local community groups have also voiced positions regarding decentralization; however, the editor is unaware of the existence of any fully developed plans by these groups.

The Bundy Plan: "Reconnection for Learning"

The Bundy Report, as drawn up by a panel of experts on community affairs and prominent educators, under the direction of McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation, argues that New York City and most urban schools suffer from dehumanization and a lack of clearly understood and effectives lines of responsibility. In its view, greater control by parents will result in better education for the children; it would therefore create parent representatives on both Local and Central Board levels.

The plan calls for a federation of 30 to 60 local school districts. Each of these districts would be governed by a board of eleven members, of which six would be elected by a parent assembly and five would be selected by the Mayor from a list maintained by the Central Board of persons nominated by community groups. These local boards would have the authority to determine education policy, including curriculum — subject to state requirements, to dispense funds allocated by the city according to local needs, and to hire and fire school personnel. While the present tenure would be protected citywide, new tenure would be determined by the districts.

The Central Board would become a reconstituted nine-member lay board, of which four would be appointed by the Mayor from nominations by a selection board composed of heads of educational institutions and civic organizations, and five would be appointed by the Mayor from nominations by the local boards. The Central Board would maintain long-range planning, research and organizational roles and would operate special schools and specialized and vocational high schools.

The Mayor's Plan

The Bundy Plan came to be known as the Mayor's Committee Plan, and the Lindsay Plan accepts the basic principles and most of the specifics of the Bundy Plan. However, in response to pressure from many opponents of the Bundy Plan (especially the Board of Education), the Mayor's revision made provisions for preventing possible "abuses of power" by local school districts.

The Lindsay plan increased the power of the Central Board of Education by permitting it to: intervene where is determines that established norms are being violated; continue to operate academic high schools; determine eligibility of all pedagogical staff through qualifying exams; and evaluate curricula of local boards.

The Regents Plan

The Regents Plan makes two basic assumptions: 1) that no form of reorganization or distribution of power for decision-making is justified unless it serves the basic function of bringing children in the slums up to the achievement level of other children in the city; and 2) that any evolving plan must guarantee and protect the rights and opportunities of the children —there must be no action which in any way denies or limits educational opportunities for any child. The Regents Plan, just as the Bundy Plan, recognizes the failure of the Board of Education in raising achievement in the city schools. It therefore proposes that the current nine-member Board of Education be removed and replaced by a new five-member board to be appointed by the Mayor. Rather than insisting on an immediate decentralization plan, however, this new board would then be instructed to come up with a plan for decentralization during the next year, making provision for a transitional phase from July 1968 to a decentralized system in July 1971.

In the meantime, the Central Board could delegate some or all of its authority to a specified number of temporary small districts in order to raise the reading and math achievement levels in the slums. This plan would result in the creation of more "demonstration districts" such as already exist in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Twin Bridges and I.S. 201.

The Board of Regents envisions the eventual creation of 15 local school districts (less than one-half the number now existing in New York City) encompassing both elementary and secondary schools. The local boards would contract their own superintendents who would in turn recommend all other personnel. The tenure and promotion of all present personnel would continue.

Afro-American Teachers Association

The Afro-American Teachers Association takes the position that only through clearly established local autonomy can low-income and minority group neighborhoods begin to educate their children. In a statement prepared as a reaction to the Bundy Report, the ATA asked for legislation to provide the legal base and mechanisms for this control.

Assuming a Central Coordinating Agency (the Board of Education), this agency should provide a variety of services to the autonomous local school districts, but not be able to control them. Its membership should evolve from the boards of these local districts.

Each of the community boards should be chosen by persons living in the community, and should consist largely of children attending its schools. These boards should have responsibility for determining educational policy and maintaining standards within the schools of the district. They should be able to recruit, hire and fire all school personnel, including the district superintendents; develop meaningful subject matter; determine monitary needs of the districts, with authority to disburse monies; and bring together other resources to support the districts' schools from the communities as well as from colleges, universities, private corporations and city agencies.

The United Federation of Teachers

The United Federation of Teachers has not put forth a plan of its own for decentralization. Rather it has reacted to existing plans. The UFT maintains instead that much of the failure of the New York City schools could be remedied by significant increases of financial allotments and various administrative changes which would free teachers to devote more attention to the instruction of their students.

In its response to the Bundy plan, the United Federation of Teachers offered several alternative elements. The UFT proposed 15 districts, rather than 30-60, as providing the best administrative efficiency. The 11-member boards in these districts would be elected by parents of children attending the schools in the districts. These boards would have the right to determine overall school policy, subject, however, to professional decisions regarding methodology and texts. The local boards would select the district superintendent, but would have no authority to hire or fire school staff.

The Central Board would be a nine-member lay board appointed by the Mayor from names voted on by all members of local boards. Central authority would be maintained for most budgetary controls. Assignment of teachers, collective bargaining and tenure would also be maintained centrally. To avoid competition between local districts and the United Federation of Teachers for Central Board funds, local districts would receive an increase in financial allotments proportionate to any salary gains negotiated by teachers.

Board of Education "Further Decentralization of the Public Schools"

As the title of its proposal suggests, the New York City Board of Education considers itself to have made efforts towards decentralization in the past years. The need for increased financial assistance and the ultimate objective of improving instruction provide the bases for this plan for "further decentralization."

Two years ago, the Board of Education increased the number of school districts from 25 to 30. Under the present proposal, it would increase the authority of these districts. Local school boards would have the right to select the chief educational officer, to consult in the selection of principals in the district, and to decide on the priority of elementary and intermediate educational curricula from a group of centrally approved programs. They would also have the authority to allocate certain funds to fit local needs. On the recommendations made by the district superintendent to the local school boards, these boards would be given authority to grant or deny permanent tenure. Persons denied tenure would have the right to appeal to the Central Board of Education. The method for selecting these local school boards is not clear.

The Central Board would maintain responsibility for administering all high schools in the city and for determining a general curriculum and standards of achievement for elementary and intermediate schools. Teacher appointments and assignments would also be made centrally, and the Board of Examiners would be retained to examine new teachers and candidates for promotion.

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